

House Republican Press Release

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**Democrat Majority Kills Affordable Housing Reforms Offered by Reps
Miller, Harkins**



Two badly needed reforms to the state's affordable housing law offered by state Representatives Lawrence G. Miller, R-122nd District, and John A. Harkins, R-120th District, were rejected by the majority Democrats in a party-line vote Wednesday on the floor of the state House of Representatives.

The measures, which were offered as amendments to a related bill (House Bill 6539), would have required that developers applying for approval of proposed affordable housing projects consisting of more than 25 units equip them with automatic fire extinguishing systems, and would have increased from 30 to 40 percent the number of apartments in a proposed development of more than 50 units that have to be maintained as affordable housing, the legislators said.

"I am at a loss to explain why the majority Democrats were so overwhelmingly opposed to two measures that would have significantly improved safety conditions at affordable housing complexes and made more units in them available as affordable rentals," Representative Miller said. "One of the most troubling features of the state's affordable housing statute is that it does not adequately serve those it was primarily intended to help – single people and couples who cannot afford to live in the communities where they work."

"Requiring affordable housing developers to make at least 40 percent of the units in their complexes affordable would have provided thousands of Connecticut residents apartments they could afford in the towns where they are employed. The law in its current form is a cruel hoax. It enables unscrupulous developers to bypass local zoning regulations, build high-density housing complexes in areas zoned for other purposes, and make millions renting the majority of their units at prices that are as high or higher than comparable apartments elsewhere in the community."

"The state's affordable housing law has hurt homeowners throughout Connecticut while doing little to help young people and others who do not earn enough to afford apartments in their home towns or in the communities where they are employed," Representative Harkins said. "Families who have built in areas zoned for single-family housing have been severely impacted by developers who have taken advantage of the affordable

housing law to erect high density-apartment complexes in their neighborhoods. I continue to be disappointed by many of my Democratic colleagues - many of whom represent suburban communities that have been negatively impacted by affordable housing projects – who refused to support our amendments. Actions speak louder than words - Democrats won't be happy until all our towns look like Bridgeport. I will continue my fight to reform or repeal the affordable housing law to defend neighborhoods and protect property owners' investments in their homes.”

“Given the fact that they killed a sensible proposal that would have kept fires in affordable housing complexes from burning out of control and saved lives, it's quite apparent that the majority Democrats are more concerned about protecting developers' profits than they are about the safety of the tenants who live in their buildings,” Representative Miller said. “A major fire at an affordable housing complex in Trumbull damaged or destroyed most of the units because they were not equipped with automatic fire extinguishers. Because the fire occurred during the day, there were no injuries or fatalities. However, if it had broken out at night, many of the tenants could have been seriously killed or injured.”